

Citizens Advisory Committee for Marietta Parks (CACMP)
Minutes of the Meeting on May 13, 2010
Fire Station #1, Training Room

A public meeting of CACMP was called to order promptly at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Jim King. All members were present except **Bill Hagemann and Mitch Hunter**.

Jim King announced that the meeting scheduled for April 29th had been cancelled since there was not a quorum present.

The proposed minutes of the April 15, 2010, CACMP meeting were adopted unanimously after a motion by Randy Weiner and a second by Kim Gresh.

A presentation was given by Danny Pralgo, David Carr and Jay Andrews for 6-4-3 DP Baseball Academy (the company), the organization that is negotiating with the City over the company's proposal to lease and operate Aviation Park as a baseball business. They had made a proposal to the City for a long-term lease of the property but it ran afoul of the argument that a city government cannot contract for longer than the four year term of a city council. The original offer was for the company to invest \$800,000 or more and have the responsibility to improve and maintain the ball complex and to pay an annual fee in exchange for the right to manage and operate the baseball complex as a profit-making venture for 20 years. Since the matter is in negotiation, the presentation was necessarily general. The company is still interested in gaining the right to operate the property but is unwilling to invest as much money if the length of the lease were only for four years. Generally, the company now would expect the city to improve the complex and turn operation of it over to the company for an annual fee and the responsibility of maintaining and operating it as well as managing the construction contracts. The company expects to provide instruction, organize ball teams and conduct tournaments. The advantages to the City would be in not having to staff, maintain and manage the property. City tax revenue and business income could expect a boost from sales to the expected 22,000 annual visitors to the complex. The potential disadvantages to the City include loss of control of an existing facility, very limited access to children and adults who cannot pay the market price for quality instruction promised by the company, loss of easy access by the local community. CACMP members had several questions and suggestions: Randy Weiner recommended a partnership with schools. Heath Garrett suggested that the property may have other values and indicated that discussions are underway that might impact the property, causing him to request a month for the Property Acquisition Sub-committee to explore options. There is a possibility that another, more appropriate baseball park may become available. Betty Hunter, Michelle Kelly and Melody Unger recommended increased access to services through scholarships. The company is a profit-making company and seemed open to offering very limited scholarship opportunities. Generally, the CACMP members stated that they were impressed by the dedication to quality baseball programming displayed by the company and by their patience in sticking to this project despite the apparent barrier to a long-term contract.

Betty Hunter made a motion that the City run the baseball program through a private operator, 6-4-3 DP, and that the City negotiate with that company to accomplish that goal. Melody Unger seconded the motion and it was approved by majority vote with Michelle Cooper Kelly voting against the motion.

Michael Helenek moved that Long-term agreements for management contracts are needed and the City should find a mechanism to contract beyond the term of Council for programs that benefit the City. Cindy Suto seconded the motion. Heath Garrett suggested that there is a diversity of opinion on the Council and that we should not advocate for one side or another. Cindy withdrew her second. Walter Moon then seconded the motion. The motion failed to attract a majority of the votes and failed.

Jim King solicited Sub-Committee reports:

Cindy Suto made a report of the recommendations of the Parks Improvement Sub-Committee and discussed future work to be done by their Sub-Committee on recommendations for The Sixth Grade Academy and Henry Park. As a result of their current recommendations:

Kim Gresh made a motion that CACMP advise the City Council to consider immediately undertaking the following park improvements:

Whitaker Park needs a shade structure, restrooms and trail lighting so that citizens may walk safely in the evening.

Lewis Park needs a shade structure for the dog park and restrooms.

Laurel Park needs viewing deck and shade structure.

Custer Park should be explored as a future soccer complex.

Lake Park needs landscaping and benches.

Merritt Park needs an extended track, bridge, shade structure and restrooms.

Brown Park has been the subject of a previous recommendation by CACMP to the Council. CACMP also recommends moving forward with the installation of a grouping of proposed statues described in the current plan.

Jim Morris seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Trail and Connectivity Sub-Committee members consulted with Dan Cox and are following up on some valuable information they gathered. Jim King reported that the City is talking to the Department of Interior, to the military and to Life Chiropractic University about linking Burruss and Wildwood.

The next meeting will be on May 27, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the same location.

Respectfully submitted, this 15th day of March, 2010

Jim Morris, Secretary